CHARLES ELIOT NORTON

TWO ADDRESSES

BY

EDWARD WALDO EMERSON

AND

WILLIAM FENWICK HARRIS

REFERENCE LIBRARY * HOUGHTON MIFFLIN CO. * BOSTON, MASS.
Archive
Collection

This book may not leave the Offices
and if borrowed must be returned within 7 days

CHARLES ELIOT NORTON

TWO ADDRESSES

CHARLES ELIOT NORTON

CHARLES ELIOT NORTON

TWO ADDRESSES

BY

EDWARD WALDO EMERSON

AND

WILLIAM FENWICK HARRIS

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
The Riverside Press Cambridge
1912

CHARLES ELIOT NORTON

THE MAN AND THE SCHOLAR

An Address Delivered before a General Meeting
of the Archaeological Institute of America
in Toronto, December, 1908

BY

Edward Waldo Emerson

CHARLES ELIOT NORTON

The Man and the Scholar

Mr. President; members of the Archaeological Institute of America here assembled:—

You have honored me by your call to speak to you of your Founder and first President. "Dead, yet living" are the first words that come to me. Through eighty years he strove to choose at each parting of the ways the upward path. He has opened the eyes of hundreds to see it through the fog or the dazzle. He has awakened many in fellowship to strive to be, as he has been, a Helper and Illuminator.

Near friends asked me not to make a eulogy, but the more closely I have looked into Mr. Norton's life, the more faithfully active and brave and sweet I find it. Yet as far as I can in this short space, I will let him speak, or his friends, or his works, speak for him.

In the journal of Judge Samuel Sewall is an entry written in the seventeenth century telling of an earnest discourse he had with young John Norton, later first pastor of the ancient church in Hingham, Massachusetts. I wish there were space for it here, for those who knew your honored Founder, gone from our sight, might see in this brave young ancestor, under utterly different conditions, the essential traits of his

descendant — a questioner, scrupulous yet hopeful, an independent thinker, steadfast American, a teacher of the Spirit and doer from the heart, Charles Eliot Norton.

His grandfather, it is said, was almost driven to utter unbelief by the dreadful "Scheme of Salvation" taught in his day.

Andrews Norton, Charles Norton's father, was, in his prime, the eager yet well-equipped and skilful champion of the new Unitarianism. "He believed," said his friend, the Reverend Doctor Newell, "in the Gospel of Christ and not the Gospel of Calvin — the gospel as it came fresh from Heaven in its own native beauty and power." He was counted an able theologian, an exact scholar, and an accomplished critic. Yet he was withal a lover of nature and of poetry, and himself ventured on the slopes of Parnassus. During his careful work of translation of the Gospels, and writings on their genuineness, he corresponded with authors and critics abroad, and was, for a time, the editor of the "Select Journal of Foreign and Periodical Literature." Removing from Bowdoin College to Cambridge, he was, first, tutor in mathematics, then librarian and lecturer on biblical criticism, and finally professor of sacred literature. He fixed his home in the quiet of Shady Hill, long before the invasion by roaring railroads, and irresistible encroachments of Boston suburbs. Though formidable in the critic's chair, he was a kindly man, domestic and hospitable.

Madam Norton was of the Eliot family, a lady of refinement and of great dignity and sweetness.

Of such parents was born a son, Charles Eliot, in November, 1827, in the pleasant house in a sunny clearing of a wood of pines and beeches, his father's home, and his, until his death nearly eighty-one years later. It was a home of the best type of New England after the passing of its austerity allowed its brave and kindly virtues to shine out, while its simplicity remained. But three years since, Mr. Norton, in a talk on old Cambridge to its Historical Society, welcomed, he said, "the opportunity to express my piety for my native town, and to say how dear a privilege I count it to have been born in Cambridge and to have spent here much the greater part of my life, and how deeply I reverence the ancestors who have bequeathed to us the blessing of their virtues and the fruits of their labors.

"The society was of exceptional pleasantness and of pure New England type. Few artificial distinctions existed in it, but the progress of democracy had not swept away the natural distinctions of good breeding and superior culture. Its informing spirit was liberal and cheerful; there was general contentment and satisfaction with things as they were. . . . The households were homes of thrift without parsimony, of hospitality without extravagance, of culture without pretence. The influence of the college gave to the society a bookish turn, and there was much reading — much more of the reading which nourishes the intelli-

gence than in these days of newspapers, magazines and cheap novels." Every one was then interested in the *Edinburgh* and the *North American Reviews.*

The boy had no brothers to grow up with, but the blessing of three sisters, two older and one younger than himself. Hence, and because of his delicate organization (though his constitution was good), also because he was born a scholar, he did not have so much of the rough and healthy playground education, but was early a lover of birds and flowers, and ready to settle in a corner with an imaginative book when he came in. He never went through the hunting and fishing epoch of a boy's life — except in books. As often is the case with such boys, he was given to friendships with older people. He tells of Longfellow's kindness to him, a boy of eight, when, as a man of thirty, he came to live near by, and later of Lowell as a dear friend and neighbor in their youth, quoting Cowley's lines, of the University town oversea: —

> "Ye fields of Cambridge, our dear Cambridge, say,
> Have ye not seen us walking every day?
> Was there a tree about, which did not know
> The love betwixt us two?"

The Holmes boys were near neighbors; the lively Wendell until he went to Paris to study, and John, shy, humorous, beloved, for life.

His sister tells a pleasant story of the little Charles, perhaps ten years old, which has the flavor of a childhood of other days than these. He was sick with membranous croup, now called diphtheria. Dr. John

Ware told the mother that he had known but one case to get well. The child himself knew that he was in great danger. He hoarsely whispered to his mother, "*I wish I could live, so that I could edit father's Works.*" He did.

He went to day schools in Cambridge and in Boston, and entered Harvard, a small boy of fourteen, — in jackets. As his delightful home was but a half mile off, and he could bring his friends and cousins there, he naturally did not enter far into ordinary undergraduate life, rather convivial in those days, and less athletic. Classmates, and always friends, were Childs and Lane, later Harvard professors, the first the genial man, lover of Old English ballads, the second the witty and exact Latin scholar. Charles Norton easily stood high in rank, especially in the classics. In those days, Southern youths, of attractive manners and aristocratic bearing, formed a considerable fraction of every class. Norton formed friendships with some of these, and because of this, and familiarity with the Southern point of view through his summer visits to Newport, where they then resorted, he, though an antislavery man, was less early and active in the cause than Lowell. Francis Parkman was a college friend, and after his return, broken in health and eyesight from his recklessly brave experiment in venturing his sickly life in wild adventures with a stone-age people, to study there, Charles Norton helped him in preparing from his notes his admirable *Oregon Trail.*

It now seems a strange, but it was a wise choice, which sent the young Norton away from the library to the counting-room of a Boston firm engaged in the East India trade. But it is well for a scholar or a teacher to have been in the market-place and street, acquired their useful drill, and known their temptations. More than that, the three months' ocean voyage to India as supercargo, the contrast between the raw university town and the drowsy splendor of the ancient East, must have stirred his imagination, short as was his stay. He returned by way of Egypt and Italy, and that fair land began to throw her charm over him when his father's failing health called him home. Then (1852), in company with a friend, he went into an independent business, — cotton perhaps, — venturing therein a legacy that had come to him. In a year or two all of this was gone, but he left no debt unpaid, and withdrew from trade with honor and experience and the knowledge that his call was otherwhere.

First of all then, he acted, happily, as Wordsworth says,

> "Upon the plan that pleased his childish thought,"

and edited the two volumes of the translation of the Gospels which his father was finishing when death overtook him; also he gathered the miscellaneous essays. It pleased him, too, to print a little volume of his father's hymns and poems. Some of these last show great love of nature and close observation, one especially on a New England ice-storm. The beau-

tiful hymn, "While thee I seek, protecting Power," was written by the elder Norton.

The hard lot of the helpless poor had always stirred his father's pity, and it is pleasant to find that one of the first published works from the son's pen was an article in the *North American Review* on "Improved Dwellings and Schools for the Poor." Beginning as a review of certain English works on the subject, it did not stop there, but went on to show in exact detail the shocking condition of the Boston low tenement-houses, almost past belief now; to recommend strongly a board of health and sanitary laws, and to urge the duty of all good men and women considering such neglect and suffering as *calling to them* for help. He had gone to the pains of introducing wood-cuts of ground-plans and elevations of model tenements in England.

Meanwhile he went to work at his own door in Cambridge, and established, or helped to establish, an evening school, the first that had been there, for boys and men, who had to work by day. The Irish immigrants of that day were mostly illiterate. He and his friends taught these. On the day of his funeral there came, with other mourners, the mayor of an important New England city, who has been kept in his place for several terms by desire of citizens of all parties to have an honest, efficient manager of their affairs. He was a boy to whom, while he was driving a milk-cart, Mr. Norton had been a friend, and whom he had interested in making something of himself. At nearly the same

time with the evening school, Mr. Norton was active in the Sunday school of Dr. Newell's church.

But now, for a season, his health failed so far as to frighten many of his friends. His trouble was weakening and very obstinate. Yet he kept cheerful on principle and worked.

The following year, he sent forth anonymously a little book called "*Considerations of some Social Theories*" with this text from Burke, — "Flattery corrupts both the receiver and the giver, and adulation is not of more service *to the people* than to kings." In it he urged on us Americans — as he has faithfully done for more than fifty years — the duty of being watchful for the dangers that may beset "our brilliant yet audacious experiment in Democracy," and of noting, for our good, pure standards that were set up, and examples given in certain great respects, even in lands afar, and centuries long past; and that this is wiser than to look only at our fathers' achievements, and ours thus far, and blindly and extravagantly boast.

And now the happiness of a great friendship came to him. The young scholar from England, Arthur Hugh Clough, with the best fruits that the Rugby school life and training and the Oxford culture could graft on a manly and independent nature, — a poet too, and a charming man, — came to try to live here by his scholarship. He established himself in Cambridge and brought good letters. He wrote home "I have sworn eternal friendship with young Charles Eliot Norton"; and soon after, "Norton is the

kindest creature in the shape of a young man that ever befriended an emigrant stranger anywhere." He showed Clough the blessed condition of the mass of people here, their freedom from poverty, from fear, from oppression, from persecution by the intolerant — their "chance in life," and Clough saw the contrast to the sad condition common on the Continent and to a great extent in England, so much that he was partly sorry to return when a good position opened to him there. But during that short stay, a change was wrought in Charles Norton. Clough had emancipated himself, like Arnold, from the dogmas of the Church of England, and was free in his religion. Norton had gone on in the simple worship of the Channing Unitarian. Now, his religious thought was awakened, stimulated, broadened, through the leaven of Clough's influence. He was ready for it; he felt no shock, only new joy and beauty in the inner and outer life, in realizing, as never before, that "the Spirit maketh free." No jar was felt with the belief and practice of the household. To him it may have seemed that he was taking up his father's advancing thought where he had dropped it, and carrying it farther forward. Happily, perhaps, the elder Norton was gone when he came to express his belief, for each generation can advance but so far — so dear and deeply sunk are the lessons of childhood.

In 1855, Mr. Norton sailed for Europe with his mother and sisters. They staid abroad for two years, in England and Switzerland in summer; when cold

weather came, going to Italy, where they lived mostly in Rome, happy in all the rich gifts she had for them of beauty, and of companionship with the living and those whom we call dead.

It is strange that one whose life came to be so much occupied with Art never felt the personal impulse to draw or paint, nor had he in youth improved such slight opportunities to see paintings and statues as his neighborhood offered. He did not know Allston, who, during Norton's early youth, was living in Cambridge. Later, he had friendly relations with Kensett and Allan Gay. But he knew the woods and the meadows and the daily miracles of form and light and color that Nature works. Through the young artist Stillman, and also through his mother's reading, he had been interested in Ruskin's first work, the *Modern Painters*, and through Ruskin, in Turner. He modestly declined a letter to Ruskin that should make any claim on his time, but gladly took one asking leave for him to see the Turner pictures at Ruskin's home. But that good man, with sympathy not cased in reserve, most kindly showed him his treasures. A pleasant account, but erroneous in detail, of the meeting of the Norton and Ruskin families, not long after, on the Lake of Geneva, is given in Ruskin's *Præterita*, but the essence is true, that a helpful friendship and strong there sprang up, enduring to the end. These men had the common ground of noble aims earnestly pursued, delicate perceptions, keen love of natural and ideal beauty, and dislike of all that was unworthy, which they fear-

lessly expressed. Their influence on one another was helpful; each gratefully acknowledged in the other a teacher. They had sympathy; but their temperaments, gifts and experience widely differed; each could supply the other's need. Norton was nine years the younger, but neither he nor Ruskin took note of that. Norton's study of Art was new. His friend had from childhood pursued beauty in leaf, in crystal, in cloud, in man's noble or devout sentiment expressed in cathedral or in painting. Hence for his younger friend he was a wonderful guide and showman for every Italian town. Hear Ruskin's acknowledgment of his debt. "Norton saw all my weaknesses, measured all my narrownesses and from the first took serenely, and, as it seemed of necessity, a kind of paternal authority over me, and a right of guidance — though the younger, . . . and always admitting my full power in its own kind; nor only admitting, but in the prettiest way praising and stimulating. . . . To me, his infinitely varied and loving praise became a constant motive to exertion, and aid in effort; yet he never allowed in me the slightest violation of the laws, either of good writing or social prudence, without instant blame or warning."

Mr. Norton tells of Ruskin that he admitted it was characteristic of himself from childhood "to be interested in things clearly visible and present." Mr. Norton said to him, one day, that when looking at a sunset he was altogether forgetful of the sunrise. "Yes," he replied, "but to-morrow morning I shall care only

for the sunrise." This high-power lens of his vision, or intellect, or conscience, dimmed or shut out everything not in the limited field, — till he chanced to look elsewhere. This was all very well for a kitten or a child, but it had sad consequences for those who in their youth, hungry for right teaching, had accepted this charming idealist and writer as a Pope infallible as to art, from methods of drawing to the virtue or sinfulness of liking the paintings of Cimabue or of Raphael.

Norton, with all his respect for the master, had common sense, and a Greek horror of the overmuch. He tried to check his friend's impulse to rush into weak superlatives; he was very tender of him and hated to have him criticised by others; and Ruskin frankly said Charles Norton was one of the "very few who have had the distinct power of the training little me to any good." In sadder days for both, Norton was to be his best stay and comfort.

I think I am right in saying that Mr. Norton did not, during that visit to Europe, see as much of Ruskin as in the later years. He went on to Italy and read there in his books, saw pictures and churches and palaces with Ruskin's praise or blame in his mind; but, though modest and glad of instruction, and sympathetic, he had the old New England blood in him, sat at no man's feet, but studied and thought about what he saw, and made up his own mind, yet subject to new light. Mr. Norton learned the language of Italy and studied her history and poetry on the spot, in kindly relation with her people, high and low. The

spell of Dante began to fall on him, to grow stronger with the passing of the years. Not long after his return, he published his "New Life," the *Vita Nuova*, prose and verse rendered with a simple beauty.

He had now regained comfortable, but never robust health; he had learned much; his outward and his inward eyes were opened to natural beauty, and the spiritual beauty of which it was the echo and symbol. Ruskin had done him a great service, Italy did more. Yet he did not wish to stay there: first and last he was an American. He knew that his countrymen and women needed all the elevating influences that he joyed to feel working in him, and were already awakening to them. He had no conceit, but naturally went home to work, as *one scholar more*, in a community that needed such. He wished to do his part.

Yet he came home when a cloud, forerunner of a devastating storm, lay heavily on the supposed interests and heavier on the consciences of the people. He was never an agitator, and War seemed a calamity not to be thought of; but he, like his father before him, believed in the Higher Law. Yet in the lull before the storm an event happened in New England, a sign of promise that the awakening of thought and taste and spiritual life in the last decades was to find expression; that our literature was to be more virile and less secondary than hitherto. The *Atlantic Monthly* was born in Boston, with Lowell *in loco parentis*, in November, 1857. Norton was one of the contributors to its brilliant first number. He also wrote for the

North American Review, and, later, Lowell, when urged to become its editor, made it a first condition that Norton should be his assistant; and he proved an active helper.

In 1860 Mr. Norton produced his *Notes of Study and Travel in Italy*, an attractive book to-day, showing observation of history-in-the-making as well as study of the Past; and, as always, the ethical is as marked as the æsthetic quality.

The guns of Sumter shook up the hot, chaotic mass of discordant opinion, and straightway public sentiment began to crystallize. The air cleared and was breathable once more. And people found war, with all its terrors, better than the humiliations and suspense that had preceded it. Mr. Norton could not have served a month in the field, but he served at home, and well, all through the war. After the mortifying rout of the Union army at Bull Run, Mr. Norton wrote in the *Atlantic Monthly* on "The Advantages of Defeat" to make Northern people rightly estimate the greatness of the problem, and feel that it must be dealt with wisely, steadily, and bravely, if the Country and the cause of Free Institutions were to be saved. Soldiers' Aid Societies sprang up in every town, and Mr. Norton gave his personal work at Cambridge; also to help that admirable agency, the Sanitary Commission. He was one of those who strengthened the hands of our noble War Governor, assuring him of the joy of all good citizens in his service in having "kept Massachusetts firmly to her own ideals, and

himself represented all that was best in her spirit and aims."

After the Peninsular Campaign, when the war began to drag, in August, 1862, that indefatigable patriot, John Murray Forbes of Boston, saw how it would help the vigorous prosecution of the war to collect clippings from all sources to encourage the people and the soldiers and spread doctrines of sound politics, honest finance, efficient recruiting, the dealing with "contrabands," refugees, and spies, and send broadsides made up of these clippings all over the land. Mr. Norton took charge of this work with admirable helpers, and these broadsides of the New England Loyal Publication Society were sent out once a week. Country editors gladly availed themselves of them, and it is thought that they reached one million readers. Mr. Norton was an active member of the "Committee of Fifty" alumni who planned and carried out the building of the Hall on the Delta in memory of the Harvard men who gave their lives for their Country.

In May, 1862, Mr. Norton was happily married to Miss Susan Sedgwick.

In the autumn and winter evenings of 1865–1866, Lowell and Norton came once a week to Longfellow's, at his request, to hear him read his renderings of Dante into English verse as literal as might be, and better them if they could. They knew their friend's sincerity, sweetness, and modesty, and so well that they obeyed the rule given by Ecclesiasticus, "And be not faint-hearted when thou sittest in judgment."

So all went well, and his work was helped. "They were delightful evenings," said Mr. Norton. "There could be no pleasanter occupation. The spirits of poetry, of learning, of friendship were with us."

His own love for Dante and insight into the deep significance of the great poem were quickened by these studies with his friends, and the demonstration, by Longfellow's magnificent attempt, of the difficulty of rightly rendering a subtile line of a poem in a Latin tongue by a line of a language so largely Teutonic, made him feel that he must translate the Divine Comedy into faithful and poetic prose, as later he did with the best success.

In the summer of 1868, Mr. Norton went to Europe, taking with him his young wife and little children, his venerable mother, and his two sisters, and they remained abroad for five years, at first in Italy, later in Germany and England. During that time he was in close relation with Ruskin, by constant correspondence, when they were not together.

The first three years of Mr. Norton's stay in the Old World towns were most happy in all ways; — the family life in pleasant lands and far cities, alive with associations; freedom from outside duties, so exacting at home; the sense of the rapid growth of his power to see beauty; the increasing love and reverence for Dante; the study of the minds and aspirations of the men of the Middle Ages, through their works, and in the original records, which he diligently studied; the many profitable acquaintances; — all these made

the days pleasant. But this was to change. In the autumn of 1871 Mr. Norton took his family to Dresden to spend the winter. There the great sorrow of his life fell on him in the death of his wife, a woman beautiful in all ways. She left to him six little children, and love and care for these were to help through the first darkness of the following years. Yet tenderness to his family and friends seemed to be but strengthened; and those less near, who visited Mr. Norton and his family in their lodgings in England, found in that temporary home from which a light had gone out, and where a gracious presence was missed, the essence of a home still there, — courage and kindness made more real by the testing they had undergone; the cheerful lending of attention and sympathy to others, and duties done, and labors bravely pursued.

Ruskin, older, more restless and sadder, was there; for that which was unbeautiful and dark in life now occupied this sensitive soul more than art. These things wrought havoc with his mind and conscience, yet he would not cease from manifold studies and works. More than once his brain and body gave way in the succeeding years, yet his friend soothed, counselled, pleaded, and was his helper, as far as he could be helped, to the end; but that did not come for years.

In his earlier visit to England, Mr. Norton had formed a cordial friendship with Mrs. Gaskell, who dedicated one of her books to him, and one of his daughters bears her name.

Mr. Norton found a new friend in the dreamer,

turned brave worker, William Morris, but was especially drawn to Burne-Jones by his earnest and thoughtful life and work. His old friend Stillman, of versatile mind and gifts, painter, woodsman, writer, brave friend of Greece and Crete in their troubles, was there. But for the first time Mr. Norton met Carlyle, now sad with a bereavement like his own, and broken with age. Carlyle visited him when he was convalescent from pneumonia and wrote of "Norton, a man I like more and more." Again he wrote: "He is a fine, gentle, intelligent and affectionate creature, with whom I have always a pleasant, soothing and interesting dialogue when we meet, — the only fault yesterday was I liked it too well and staid too long."

When the Nortons sailed for home in May, 1873, Carlyle wrote, "I was really sorry to part with Norton . . . he has been through the winter the most human of all the company I, from time to time, had. A pious, cultivated, intelligent, much-suffering man. He has been five years absent from America and is now to return *One*, instead of *Two*, as he left."

But in those months in England, ill in body and with the joy of life broken, his sympathy and his quality so moved Carlyle, that he, later, entrusted to him the work of editing his Correspondence with Emerson, a duty fulfilled with delicacy and exact fidelity to the spirit of the trust. Mr. Norton felt himself driven, by what seemed to him the gross violation by Froude of his dead friend's confidence and mandate, — in publishing parts of letters that should have been

burned and, as published, were damaging and misleading, — to overcome his reluctance and bring out with delicacy and conscience just so much more of the private correspondence as was necessary to correct the mischievous impression of the really loving, but sadly human, domestic relation which Froude's want of refined perception had spread abroad. The case required, in Mr. Norton's book in defence of his friend's memory, severe plain-speaking, which, however reluctantly, was done with courage and dignity.

Sad and sick as Mr. Norton was during that stay in England, his close association with two elder friends, both suffering in their degree from their own griefs and failing health, though surely depressing, yet, I believe, wrought its good result. For both he felt affectionate pity. He let in rays of light into their dark days, and that comforted his own; and he saw how unlovely and unhelpful is pure pessimism.

In 1873, in latter May, the doors of the ideal home at Shady Hill were once more opened to sunlight and to friends. This must have lightened the shadow left by his loss on Mr. Norton's mind. Also an event occurred which proved helpful to him in the way natural to him — the best way, helping others. The college close by was changed, for there was a new President. That institution had offered to youth a "liberal education" for two hundred and thirty-eight years, and had created Bachelors and Masters of Arts, but the Fine Arts had had no recognition except by allusion. Mr. Norton was invited to give some lec-

tures, and in 1875 was made Professor of the Fine Arts. Some thirty-four students attended; when he resigned in 1897, the attendance had increased thirteenfold. He ploughed a fallow ground and sowed it for a crop sorely needed. Some of the seed fell on stony ground, but the harvest was good, and many were fed, and saved good seed-corn from which harvests elsewhere in the land were to spring. The studies of the old-time compulsory curriculum used to be called "The Humanities," and with reason. Now the humanities were to be taught to greater numbers than by Frisbie, Everett, Ticknor, Longfellow, Felton, and Lowell, and with a freer hand; and this was the more important as the opening sciences made their claim good, and popular feeling for the time was unfavorable to the classics.

When this class had so many applicants that the lecture had to be given in Sanders Theatre, Mr. Norton entered, looked out on the throng of students, and began, "*This is a sad sight.*" For he knew how large a fraction of his audience were idle boys who chose what they thought would be an easy course. "In these lectures," as his friend, Professor Charles H. Moore, said, Mr. Norton "drew aside a curtain and showed to thoughtless or immature boys a glimpse of the vast hall of being in which they, or their ancestors, had constructed a little hut and yard, shutting out its celestial dimensions. Norton knocked a breach in these walls, and let them see Nature, and what her beauties symbolized," and the great interpreters of

these as living teachers, and the relations of Poetry, History, Religion, Human Life, and Conduct, to Art.

Mr. William Roscoe Thayer, one of those students who heard him, has well said that the secret of his influence with them lay in his power to *humanize* knowledge; that the fact was irradiated when *shown but as an example of general law.* "The pertinence, the applicability to yourself, of whatever art or history or nature presents to you he unfolded very simply and with unforgettable impressiveness."

Young artists just returned saturated with the teaching of the *ateliers* of Paris, or landscape-painters straining after the truth of vibrating atmosphere and prismatic coloring in nature, are apt to sneer at "Literary Art." But the scholar, however little he knows of technique — secrets of the craft — can from his training look on art as having been, through the ages, a measure of, and an engine of, civilization. Principles and motives, alike in steamships and pictures, come first; details of structure and finish important to their effectiveness, *second.* Mr. Norton treated art as man's effort at expression.

Let me give a few questions from his examination papers: —

Honos alit artes. In what sense is this true or false?

Assuming the fine arts to be modes of beautiful expression of mental condition, what is the meaning of "Morality in Art"? Consider the test of excellence afforded by choice of subject, by character of execution.

What does Civilization mean?

Discuss what Plato meant by: "The man was seen to be a fool who . . . measured the Beautiful by other standard than that of the Good;" and Goethe by: "The Beautiful is greater than the good."

And it must have been with a smile that he submitted to the young men's consideration, in one question, some remarks of that eminent art critic, Dr. Samuel Johnson — and of Ruskin.

In art, he bade his students, not to imitate, but to follow their ideals, though the world call these illusions.

Mr. Norton opened for these young scholars side doors showing vistas into the remote but shining Past, the songs, the deep questionings, the oracles, and the wisdom that men had won, one thousand or two thousand years before the scream of the American eagle had been heard. This gave his hearers a better perspective, which might teach them modesty. He showed how far from dead the great are, and that they are wise for to-day, since humanity is the same, and the great laws are, in Antigone's words, "Not of now or yesterday, but always were."

The teaching was ethical. He showed the sons of poor men mines of spiritual treasure; the sons of rich men the responsibility of having: that wealth demanded helpful use, and leisure unselfish work; that to be a mere *dilettante* and idle collector was demoralizing. One must be a worker in some sort. All beauty is allied. "*Behavior is a fine art,*" he said. Death is

normal; what is to be feared is *necrobiosis* — death in life — the sin against the holy Spirit.

In many, in more than he knew, the leaven that he put into the lump worked; the ferment was good.

Certain criticisms on the trend of American activity and expression, purposely made very strong to command the attention of the young generation, and recalling Ruskin's sweeping *dicta*, naturally excited dissent. These were his judgments, perhaps too severe, and fallible; the steady lesson to the class was the high plane of thought and action native to the teacher.

And many young hearers carried away little else, yet that was worth coming to college for. A year before Mr. Norton died, I heard in one day the grateful witness of three different graduates, now in full tide of useful life, to their debt to those lectures in opening their eyes to the beauty and the high possibilities of life. A lawyer, writing from the activities of State Street, Boston, just after Mr. Norton's death, speaks of his instruction as the "SOLID *acquisition*" he carried from college, without which he should feel himself a "poorer man."

But Mr. Norton's relation with the University was not only as a teacher. It was administrative and advisory, and he made it human; for he was one of the Faculty, an Overseer, and for a time President of the Alumni Association. Coming back from Europe, where he had been in relation with the scholars, and at the fountains of Old World Culture, he was free from pro-

vincialism, and could make wise suggestions in the now expanding University. In cases of misdemeanor, one of his colleagues has testified that he inclined always toward mercy, to endeavors to tone up the boy, or, in cases requiring severity, to have him understand that it was better to stand his punishment, and see what good he could get out of the occasion.

Mr. Norton believed in athletics, and sometimes attended the games, but in the great matches was saddened to see the abuses which the tremendous pressure of college spirit added to the intoxication of battle wrought there, and the extent to which they were tolerated by students and by spectators. In the interest of civilization he made his protest against these excesses, but with very limited success, for the flood-tide ran too strong. Holding the faith of our fathers in true democracy, he saw how heavy a responsibility rested with our universities in training youth so that that experiment should not fail, drowned in inrushing tides of ignorance and violence. Games in themselves are good and wholesome, but the University must look to it to keep the concerns of the body subordinate to those of the spirit.

But outside of the college he never grudged his time and help. He kept interest in and spoke at the Prospect Union in Cambridgeport, a club carrying on in a larger way the work of the evening school where he taught in youth. He was glad when the Harvard Annex, afterwards Radcliffe College, offered to girls the same advantages that young men enjoyed. He

accepted the invitation of country lyceums to their wintry hospitalities. He kindly came to our little farming village, as Concord was forty years ago, to tell us about Turner in our Lyceum, and, unasked, not only brought ten of Turner's water-color sketches and bade me hang them in our public library for a week; but, hearing that two or three boys and girls had tried to copy them, wrote "Keep them a fortnight longer." For a further instance of his great generosity, let me record that once, hearing of some one in Portland, Maine, who cared for Turner, he packed up and sent several of his own pictures thither. The great Portland fire came and destroyed them all.

Mr. Norton's early studies in art, stimulated by Ruskin, had been devoted to the beauty which the devotional spirit of the Middle Ages had called out of stone. But, in spite of the debased presentation of the Classic in the Renaissance buildings, his increasing knowledge led him to the simple yet studied beauty and majesty of the Greek. His professorship led him to the delightful task of gaining further acquaintance with Hellenic art, and that of the older empires. Happily for us in Boston, the Museum of Fine Arts was established soon after his return. He was from the first on the Board of Trustees, and his influence throughout was for most liberal expenditure for the best objects obtainable, after the most careful consideration. The educational influence of the Museum was urged and welcomed by him. In a letter written by him, but four years ago, to the New England His-

tory Teachers' Association as to the use of museum collections, he gave this timely advice: "The risk of study in a museum is that, instead of leading to the perception of beauty, — the highest object it can have, — it is too generally directed to merely scientific ends, that is, to the attainment of *knowledge about the object*, instead of to the perception and appreciation of *that which* makes the *object*, in itself, *precious* or *interesting*."

Of his admirable and far-reaching work for history, art and culture in founding and working for the Archaeological Institute of America, you, gentlemen, know more than I, your guest, and Professor Harris will speak to that point to-night. But as one who, at fourteen, dug good and lasting gifts out of Felton's Greek Reader, and forty-five years later had the joy of seeing gleaming in Grecian sunlight the marble exhumed by such labors as yours, let me render thanks to you and honor to your first President.

Mr. Norton's feeling, and that of all persons on whom the Greece of the Youth of the World has laid her spell, was expressed by John Sterling in his lament for Dædalus, by which name he personified the Art of Hellas.

> Wail for Dædalus, all that is fairest,
> All that is tuneful in air or wave;
> Shapes whose beauty is truest and rarest
> Haunt with your lamps and spells his grave.
>
> Statues, bend your heads in sorrow,
> Ye that glance 'mid ruins old,
> That know not a past, nor expect a morrow
> On many a moonlight Grecian wold.

Yet are thy visions in soul the grandest
Of all that crowd on the tear-dimmed eye;
Though, Dædalus, thou no more commandest
New stars to that ever-widening sky.

Ever thy phantoms arise before us, —
Our loftier brothers, but one in blood;
By bed and table they lord it o'er us
With looks of beauty and words of good.

Calmly they show us mankind victorious
O'er all that is aimless, blind and base.
Their presence has made our nature glorious,
Unveiling our night's illumined face.

How industrious a worker Mr. Norton was may be shown by this: that in the twenty-two years during which he was giving college courses, — often six lectures a week, involving much preparation, — he, exercising meanwhile a wide hospitality and with many public and private duties, prepared and published his principal book, *Historical Studies of Church Building in the Middle Ages*, his *Reminiscences of Carlyle*, and edited the *Correspondence of Carlyle and Goethe* and that of Carlyle and Emerson; also Lowell's Letters, and various minor works, and made his admirable prose rendering of the Divine Comedy of Dante. Meantime he was a faithful correspondent, especially with Ruskin, and, during two summer trips abroad, did what he could to help his works and comfort his friend's later days. Also, after he was seventy-five years old, in the new century, Mr. Norton edited the *Memorial of Two Friends* (Lowell and Curtis), the

little book on *The Poet Gray as a Naturalist*, and finally the two volumes of Ruskin's letters to him.

Speaking of the first book Mr. Norton published, *Studies in Italy*, Ruskin said that, taken in connection with Norton's Essay on the *Vita Nuova*, "a more just estimate may be found of religious art in Italy than by the study of any other books yet existing. At least I have seen none in which the tone of thought was at once so tender and so just."

Mr. Norton always wrote clearly and with taste. His rendering of the *Canzone* in the *New Life* keeps wonderfully well this simple charm, and even in the far harder task of translating the *Divina Commedia*, he avoids pedantry and writes with simplicity and beauty. It should be enough to quote Mr. Lowell's statement, that Mr. Norton wrote "first-rate English prose." To him one may apply what Lowell said of Dryden, "He wrote as a gentleman, rather than an author."

It has been regretted that so much of Mr. Norton's time was taken up with editing, and that he did not leave more original work. "The written word abides," — yet sometimes merely on shelves. What *he* did was faithful and excellent: the spoken word goes on its way, and is harder to trace; none the less it has reached hundreds directly, and we believe is working still.

Mr. Norton was happy in his friendships. That group of high-minded poets, and writers and teachers, some of them statesmen, yet all humane and helpers in their day, who, in the last century, gave standing to our country in the world of thought, and raised

the tone of our people in a great crisis, — all called Norton friend. Yet he was not a disciple, nor too secondary. He was among the early members of the Saturday Club, then a brilliant constellation; but when its brighter stars had vanished, one by one, still kindly came and presided at the table, where the old members perhaps were sadly present to him by their absence.

It should be said also that the men of a far younger generation, bright, but in more Bohemian fashion and with less restrained deportment, asked him to be the President of the Tavern Club. He accepted, and ruled the wilder feast with genial tact and to the pleasure of the company while his strength allowed.

Wherever he travelled or sojourned abroad, his courtesy, his culture, his kindness, found him friends. At home the bond was very dear between him and Lowell, Longfellow, and Professor Child; I think, too, with John Holmes.

Mr. Norton always urged, and especially for Americans, the quickening of the imagination, especially through the great poets — "the Imagination which unites us with our race, which lifts us out of mere narrow provincialism into our share in the eternal brotherhood of man." He urged, as the three essential books, Homer, Dante, and Shakespeare, as presenting respectively, (1) Homer, the natural man, dignified and noble, (2) Dante, man touched by spiritual interests, man seeking to reconcile the difficulties of this world with an interpretation of its relation to a spiritual life,

which makes all things clear, and (3) Shakespeare for the truth of his presentation of human life to our knowledge and our sympathy. (I do not use his words in full.)

But any story of Mr. Norton's life would be sadly lacking that did not bring in Ashfield, whither he went about 1869, wishing to give his family the safety and joy of country life in the summer. On his return from Europe he went back to that independent little village far off in the Franklin hills. There he established, not a summer cottage, but another home, — feeling that he must not *use* the town, but take part in its lot, and be a neighbor. Not long after, the good and brave gentleman, George William Curtis, visiting his friend, decided to make a home there, in the like spirit, for part of the year. Their good feeling and wishes were met by the people of the town. Their attitude should be a lesson to "summer people," who talk of "natives," and recalls Tennyson's picture of Lancelot: —

> Then the great knight, the darling of the court,
> . . . into that rude hall
> Stept with all grace, and not with half disdain
> Hid under grace, as in a smaller time,
> But kindly man moving among his kind.

Both kept a warm relation to Ashfield for the rest of their lives. They lent themselves to its service in all ways, and once a year at a village banquet drew admirable and eminent guests thither to meet the Ashfield people.

Their best service perhaps was to incite and help them to revive the dead Academy. This was done, and it was never in a more prosperous condition than to-day.

Two months ago the people of Ashfield gathered in their town hall to express their sense of what Mr. Norton had been to them, as friend and helper. They told of the *impulse for good* which he had exerted through the years; of the Academy and Public Library revived and bettered; of the Cemetery Association and Village Improvement Society formed through his influence; also of the improved roads and public buildings; of the Children's Fair, his suggestion, where each year was shown their handicraft, done at school or at home. They spoke of the annual academy dinners instituted and successfully carried on for twenty-five years, and over which he gracefully presided, "as a credit and honor to the town." I give the conclusion in their words, which I cannot better: —

"In doing all this, he has asked the aid and coöperation of the townspeople, insisting that all these improvements were for their benefit, and worthy of their best efforts, thereby creating in every citizen a higher respect and deeper love for his native town. He has been not only a public benefactor, but there are many who remember his quiet charities in time of trouble or need. He has lived very unostentatiously among us, and those who met him in his quiet study, and listened to his genial conversation, and his plans for the betterment of the town, learned to have a high respect and deep love for him."

After George Curtis's death, Mr. Norton in his Memorial Address at Ashfield, in 1896, said these words, which well might be spoken by another of him: —

"No blessing can befall a community greater than the choice of it by a good man as his home; for the example of such a man sets a standard of conduct, and his influence, unconsciously not less than consciously exerted, tends to lift those who come within its circle to his own level."

After the evidence already given of Mr. Norton's words and, more important, of his acts, I hardly think that he needs defence; yet some good people misapprehended him. Certain mannerisms, certain strong statements taken alone, or misquoted; standards of taste and public duty differing from their own; ignorance of his underlying kindness, of his faithful work and earnest concern for the right, led them variously to suppose him a *dilettante*, a carper out of all sympathy with his age and country, even a pessimist. It is true he was impatient of optimism, being too sensitive to the evils of his day, public and private, and the dangers already looming even over America as results of low standards in politics, in trade, in culture, in conduct, to be content in waiting for things to work out right in secular time. He felt a duty to warn as well as work. No passive railer, but a scholar who had read the lesson of history, and knew the wisdom, never outgrown, of the great spirits of the Past, he, in his day, labored for the right with tongue and pen, and showed its beauty.

Our general of noble memory, George Crook, said, "I don't believe much in general orders. Example is the best general order," and the simple living, the hospitality and the charity of kindness, the constant conscientious work — this unconscious example was the best of Mr. Norton's teaching.

Courteous gentleman as he was, he carried the straight and keen sword of plain speech, and drew it sometimes a little suddenly, but honorably when he held that the occasion demanded. At a notable, well-nigh stormy Ashfield dinner, when, during the recent wars which were to him abhorrent, a subtle change was being wrought in the traditions and course of the United States, and the journals praised the President for "keeping his ear to the ground," Mr. Norton, in a brave but unpopular speech thus commented, — "Surely not the attitude most favorable to catch the message from on high."

He said, "There was never a land that better deserved the love of her people than America," but he was as far as possible from the "Our Country, right or wrong" stripe of patriot. When he held that, at the parting of the ways, we had taken the first irretrievable step wrong, he called on the rising generation to stand, none the less, for the right; and, pessimist as he was called, yet could end his speech with *Nil desperandum de Republica.*

Far back in the darkest period of the Civil War, when the interference of England and France was imminent, Lowell wrote for the *Atlantic* "The Washers

of the Shroud." In a letter to Norton he tells that he was in his thought while writing, partly because of the suggestion, coming from a Breton legend shown him by Norton, but mainly I think, as knowing his friend's keen anxiety that its own right action should save the country. In a vision the poet comes on the Fates washing a shroud new-woven for the country that shall deserve its doom. They seem to doubt the destiny of our republic, and chant, —

> Three roots bear up dominion, — Knowledge, Will, —
> These twain are strong, but stronger yet the third,
> Obedience; 'tis the great tap-root that still,
> Knit round the rock of Duty, is not stirred,
> Though Heaven's loosed tempests spend their utmost skill.
>
> Rough are the steps, slow hewn in flintiest rock
> States climb to power by: slippery those with gold
> Down which they stumble to eternal mock.
> No chafferer's hand shall long the sceptre hold
> Who, given a Fate to shape, would sell the block.

But Mr. Norton was brave in his ideal patriotism, although at one time much obloquy was heaped on him. He did not retaliate. His position was secure; as he once wrote, "However dark the skies, the lover of justice and peace knows that the stars are with him."

Though he could not hold to the simple faith of his fathers, through life Mr. Norton strove to keep the spiritual in view. One who knew him intimately said, "His appreciation of things lovely never at all blinded him to the deeper significance of life. He

said that the moral issue was not in the least connected with theology or dogma."

He treated all legends handed down by earnest believers, in whatever religion, with tenderness. At the celebration of the two hundredth anniversary of his ancestor's church in Hingham, he said: —

"A continuous spiritual life runs through the centuries, and here its continuity is most deeply felt, for here, in each generation, have high ideals been quickened, pure resolves animated, and all that was best in the hearts and souls of the men and women . . . cherished, strengthened and confirmed."

"The path of duty . . . trodden by the common men and women of every period, is the thread of light running unbroken through the past up to the present hour. Creeds change, temptations differ, old landmarks are left behind, new perils confront us; but always the needle points to the North Star, and always are some common men and women following its guidance." These are not the words of a *dilettante* or a man without God in the world.

Catholic in the best sense, he respected honest and devout believers in the Church of Rome. At the Ashfield Academy dinner, a "Forum" in which he insisted that the freest speech be allowed, he said, — "It is folly to call a community educated in which such an organization as the A. P. A. can spread widely. Its members have not learned the first lesson of *good citizenship*." He recognized the Catholic Church as, on the whole, an important power for good in our

country. When, some dozen years since, the Holy Ghost Hospital for Incurables, presided over by Grey Nuns from Montreal, was established almost at his door, Mr. Norton at once took an interest in it. He was chosen on the Board of Managers, and interested others, procuring important financial help. He not only gave helpful counsel, but frequently visited the patients, talking and reading with them.

An instance of catholicity of mind most remarkable in one of Mr. Norton's temperament and breeding was given me by Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson. Mr. Norton, he said, had, within a few years, told a Western friend that, if his life were to be lived again, he should like to live in Chicago, because he seemed to see working there, through the vulgarity and commercialism necessarily found in a young and prospering American town, a *power for good*, which would in time come to its own. I suppose he meant that strong loyalty that makes its dwellers, like toiling fathers, desire that the young Chicago should have every advantage and accomplishment that, perhaps, they had not.

By years and in bodily strength, with some intrusive ailments, old age came upon Mr. Norton after his threescore and ten, but to some of his friends his mind seemed freer, and his spirit even sweeter and more cheerful. With his friend Longfellow, he assumed that

> The night is not yet come; we are not quite
> Cut off from labors by the failing light.
> For Age is opportunity no less
> Then youth itself, though in another dress.

He had modestly withdrawn from duties in the college, but his memory, judgment, taste, as well as his sight and hearing, were spared to him for another ten years. He set them to work on new tasks, and they answered his call. His hospitalities to body and soul went on. One of his kind customs for many years was, at Christmas, to invite the students who could not go home to gather at his delightful house for an evening. He could not go to Ashfield in his last summer, but bore the people and institutions of that time always in mind, and sent greetings and helpful advice in their affairs.

During the last summer he grew weaker, and, when suffering in the dry heats of August, his first thought was to send to the Holy Ghost Hospital, offering to put electric fans into the wards at his own expense.

With autumn his strength failed rapidly, but he could enjoy and critically follow thoughtful books, as those of the younger Darwin and Morley, and he dictated good letters to his friends.

Some of us remember how our American pride was rightly stirred when, in the fearful hurricane at Samoa, the officers and crew of the United States warship *Trenton,* with death before their eyes, cheered the British corvette *Calliope* as she steamed past them out to the safety of the open ocean. That high-hearted act is recalled by the last sentence of a cheerful and friendly letter sent by Norton from his bed but fifteen days before his death, to Colonel Higginson, his senior by four years. . . . "I send a cheer to you from my

slower craft, as your gallant three-master goes by it with all sails set."

He died quietly on the 21st day of October, but a few weeks before his 81st birthday should have been celebrated.

When we consider how on the waters of Life the consequences of each choice of word or act spread outward in widening circles, still going on, we feel that, in this world, surely, his spirit lives and moves — and this is the only part of the universe which we know.

> For each true deed is worship: it is prayer,
> And carries its own answer unaware.
> Yes, they whose feet upon good errands run
> Are friends of God, with Michael of the sun.

CHARLES ELIOT NORTON

An Address Delivered before a General Meeting
of the Archaeological Institute of America
in Toronto, December, 1908

BY

William Fenwick Harris

CHARLES ELIOT NORTON

Professor Norton was fond of repeating this story: One day he was seated at a public dinner next to William Hunt, a man who, as Mr. Norton expressed it, possessed a command of singularly piquant profanity, which he had inherited, not, however, from his father. Some discretion is necessary in repeating the anecdote. In a pause in the dinner, Norton drew from his pocket a small piece of Japanese artistry. Passing it to his neighbor, he asked if it was not beautiful. "Beautiful!" cried Hunt in great excitement; "why, Norton, that is the Damned Ultimate!" The expression, unnecessarily expressive though some may hold it to be, describes perfectly, I think, the effort of Norton's whole life. It was Howells, if my memory is correct, who said of him that of all the men of New England he had met, Norton was the one who had done the utmost possible with what Nature had given him. Truly his struggle was always to live up to the advice Peleus gave to his valiant son when he was setting out for the Wars,—

αἰὲν ἀριστεύειν καὶ ὑπείροχον ἔμμεναι ἄλλων.

"Ever to strive for the best and to be preëminent over others."

And this was united with another quality, equally noble, a genius for friendship and a willingness to sacrifice himself in the effort to help any one who was

worth the helping. Colleague or young student, great man or struggling author, was ever welcome at Shady Hill, and always treated with that gentle courtesy of an older world, a courtesy that many have marked in Mr. Norton as possessing the most perfect democracy. Thomas Wentworth Higginson once told me that he had never seen any man so treat all the world, great or small, as so perfectly his equal, never condescending to the lowly nor subservient to the great. His willingness to give so ungrudgingly of his time has greatly reduced the possible product of his own pen; it has given to scholarship and letters, however, aid and encouragement not to be estimated. Numberless prefaces to books bear testimony of their authors' debts, and ours, too. It is true, I feel sure, that no one man in America has exerted a greater influence on other people's books than has Norton. Professor George Herbert Palmer once told me a charming story which well illustrates the desire to serve and the kindliness of which I have spoken. In preparing the text for his edition of the poet whose name he bears, Palmer found it necessary to use the first edition of Herbert's works, but a copy was not to be had, although Quaritch, who is supposed to find anything, was authorized to offer an extravagant price for it. Learning that Norton possessed a copy, Palmer with some trepidation ventured to ask if he might use it for a day or so. Mr. Norton was leaving for his summer home at Ashfield, but nothing must do but Palmer should take the book for the summer. When not in use the treasure was

carefully locked away in a safe, and was returned the day the owner came back from Ashfield. Mr. Norton listened with great interest to Palmer's account of the profit he had had from the book. Next morning the latter found a neat packet in his hall, with a note to this effect in Mr. Norton's exquisite handwriting: —

"My dear Palmer: I realized last night after you had gone, that this book belongs to you rather than to me. Will you please accept it?"

Another story, one of many, illustrates the same qualities. A young instructor in Cambridge was keenly anxious to possess a certain book of rarity and price. Norton had a copy, and knew the younger man's desires. Meeting the instructor one day upon the street, Norton remarked quite casually, "I have just seen a copy of your book at the Coöperative, and at a very reasonable price." No time was lost in the purchase. It was only long afterwards that the happy possessor realized how strange it was that such a book should be in such a place at such a price.

The world at large saw in Norton a stern critic of all that was ignoble, and failed to recognize the genial urbanity that was his. Between Europe and America and the great men of both, he served as literary ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary. When the treasures of the great chest which stood in his library are published we shall know how well he served in this capacity.

Norton had graduated in the Harvard class of 1846

with Francis J. Child, George Martin Lane, and George F. Hoar. He "highly distinguished" himself in Greek and Latin, and "excelled" in political economy, technical official phraseology of the day, which, strange to say, really shows some prescience of the student's future life. His early experience and travels in the service of an East India house gave him that practical businesslike directness which always served him well. Travel in Europe, brief teaching in Cambridge, writing his volume of "Considerations on Some Recent Social Theories," editing his father's works, further travel in Europe, brought him to one of the greatest influences of his life, — John Ruskin. It was Ruskin, I think, more than his travels, which turned him to Italian art. A scene is reported where Ruskin and Norton were both present; Norton expressed, as was his way, a pronounced opinion on a technical point in Italian art. "How presumptuous, Charles," cried Ruskin. "You have no right to an opinion on such a subject!" But continued study and observance of the relations of art and humanity soon gave him a right to opinion on almost any of the larger subjects connected with Italian art. From these years began his study of Dante, in which he was ever perfecting himself. It is in this field that he accomplished the most in minute as well as large study; it is as a student of Dante that he is best known abroad, and it is as Dante's translator that his ultimate fame will probably rest. When we undergraduates used to listen to his comments on the "Divine Comedy,"

we thought they were the off-hand sayings of inspiration; when years later I had the privilege of dropping in at Shady Hill of a morning, I could note the teacher's chair between the window and the fireplace, surrounded by concentric rings of books five and ten deep, as he read the canto and prepared his remarks for later undergraduates. The final revision of his translation shows that even in his latest years he was keeping abreast of the most recent learning in subjects connected with Dante. His translation is both the most interesting and the most scholarly which has appeared. He has been thought of as a dilettant; he was, however, a great scholar who never became a pedant, one who could deal in generalities but always support his generalities by minute knowledge. In that he was a lesson and an inspiration to others. His deep learning covered an enormous field; he was polymath and practical bibliographer; specialists in many fields had recourse to him for information. His library was the Paradise of the bibliophile as well as the scholar, two types of humanity not often united in one man, or even resembling that loose union of apparent opposites which Plato describes in the "Phaedo." His many-sided scholarship, his power to transmute his knowledge into terms of a common humanity, his insistence on true excellence in scholarship and life, were a noble combination.

In the years after his return from Europe he was making splendid preparation for that Professorship to which he was appointed in 1875. He announced his subject

as "The History of the Fine Arts and their Relation to Literature." President Eliot has recently shown, in the Norton Memorial Number of the *Harvard Graduates' Magazine*, how rapidly the field of instruction in these lectures expanded, and how, throughout the whole series of courses, there ever remained prominent that intimate association of literature with the fine arts which characterized the initial lectures. It was to this broad humanity that thousands of Harvard students attribute lasting improvement in their modes of thought, their intellectual and their moral interests. He was the scholar all the time; but the boon his students got from him was the glimpse of a true and noble personality; he dealt with the fine arts, but his parish was the wide world; the facts one learned in his courses, many as they were, were not the main thing; it was the man and his tone that were of prime importance. Herein is the great debt which not Harvard men alone, but all Americans, owe him, just as to Jowett not only Oxford men, but Englishmen in general, owe a benefit which shall surely not pass with the generation which heard the spoken word. He dealt with important fractions of succeeding generations in their youth; and for years he held up to them the highest ideals of life, of conduct, of taste, of culture, and of politics. He filled a great many vessels which were sent out into the world. It is impossible to overestimate the influence which his teachings must directly and indirectly exercise upon the men whom he addressed and, through them, upon their children

and their friends. No American has had a larger audience of students. He dealt with the stream at its source, and his influence must be felt all through its subsequent course.

When the future biographer of Mr. Norton comes to his task, he will find one of his most interesting chapters in the foundation of the Archaeological Institute of America and of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, the material for which is very rich in the manuscript records of the early days of the Institute. In the course of years, extracts from these should be published, when scholars of the classics in this country will know fully the great debt they, their fathers, and their successors, owe to Mr. Norton. Both the Institute and the School were distinctly his ideas and his alone in their origin, so far as I can discover from searching of records and from diligent inquiry among the men of older days. Since his time, the records of the Institute and of the School have become practically a directory of scholars of the classics in America, and the work of both Institute and School may truly be said to have extended an influence far beyond the classical field. It was in 1879 that the Institute was founded; it was two years later that a committee was appointed looking to the foundation of the School. I think the idea of the School had been in Norton's mind from the beginning; he had certainly thought much of the Institute before 1879. His life and pursuits naturally were leading him in the direction of extending the field of his studies and

his teaching in many new lines. His interest in things Greek, always great, was constantly increasing. In the spring of 1878 his friend Lowell was in Athens. In that same year an appeal was made to the British public, by Professor Jebb, to further archaeological research by the establishment of an English School at Athens and Rome. The English appeal contained these words: "The student of Greek and Latin books should be made to feel that the Greeks and Romans were real living people, to have some clear knowledge not only of their laws and wars, but also of their social life and of the objects that surrounded them in their everyday existence, and to enjoy the most beautiful creations of their art in the light shed upon these from a kindred source in the masterpieces of their literature." Lowell's letters to Norton show the profound influence exerted on him by the Acropolis. I cannot help associating the presence of Lowell in Greece and the appeal of Jebb in their probable effect on Norton. At any rate, he was soon endeavoring to find out possible sites for exploration in Greek lands, and with that well-directed zeal which always marked his activities, going about among his friends, asking them for their coöperation in the formation of a society for the purpose of furthering and directing archaeological investigation and research. Such success did he meet that in April, 1879, a circular was issued asking for members for the proposed society. Among others joined to Mr. Norton in signing the circular were President Eliot, Alexander Agassiz,

Professor Goodwin, Professor Putnam, Martin Brimmer. Within a month, over a hundred members were obtained. I need not give a history of the Institute or of its work, for both are well known. It is of profound interest, however, to see the part played by Norton. He was the Institute. "Archaeological Institute of America?" queried one who did good work in the service. — "No!" "Archaeological Institute of New England?" — "No!" "Archaeological Institute of Boston?" — "No! Archaeological Institute of Shady Hill!"

Dr. Holmes, writing to Lowell on May 13, 1879, said, not without genial malice: —

"I had some talk (at the Saturday Club) last time with Charles Norton, who is greatly interested in an Archaeological Association of which he is the moving spirit. It is going to dig up some gods in Greece, — if it can get money enough. I suppose they may be required in some quarters to supply an apparent want."

Charles Norton was indeed the moving spirit, and he was truly supplying an apparent want, even if the Institute has not devoted itself exclusively to gods in Greece. Meetings of the executive committee of the young Institute came with astounding frequency, the President always in the chair, and yet always, apparently, doing most of the talking and directing, though surrounded by a generous body of coöperators. It is astonishing to see how he anticipated practically all the problems which have faced the officers of the Institute in later years. He met every situation with

a sane radicalism; the dominant note was ever: — "We want nothing but the best." The best always costs a great deal of money, but where the treasury was empty, he still insisted, with far-seeing courage, on the best. "Mr. Norton stated," a record reads, "that he had recently been to Providence, where he had spoken before a select audience in regard to the Institute, and had come back with a thousand dollars promised, and prospect of more." The Institute was intended to further investigation in this country as well as in classic lands. The interest of the founder was, at that time, largely in things Greek, yet he ever generously favored liberal aid to research in America. To the gratification of all scholars and lovers of learning throughout the country, the idea of the Institute met with cordial coöperation on the part of our leading colleges and universities. The School at Athens was almost immediately founded. The Institute became one of the important means for the advancement of sound learning in America. Under Professor Norton's catholic direction the work took a wide range; investigations were conducted at Assos in the Troad and in the southwest of our own country; the interests of architecture were fostered; the higher intellectual pursuits in the community were aided by a study of the close relationship of the art and thought of the ancient world to our own. And more than all else, he started a stream of American scholars to classic lands. These men have been inspired by an increased realization of the vitality and splendor of the life and litera-

ture of the people who dwelt around the Mediterranean. And this inspiration they have brought back to innumerable pupils in this land, so that the seed of Norton's sowing has gone on, ever increasing.

Such is the debt which many of us owe. A larger body of students owes a broader debt to the quiet scholar who sat in his study and fearlessly expressed his opinion of the events that were taking place around him, exercising on the public at large the same influence which, as professor, he held over the students who attended his courses. That standard of true excellence to which he ever held himself, he insisted on for others, and men rallied about him all over the country. The simple existence of such a man with no private ends to serve, who is always ready and willing to tell his fellows the truth, and who does it clearly and unflinchingly, is a blessing to a community, demanding for its ennobling influence a gratitude that cannot be overpaid, stimulating and leading men to high achievement, and maintaining those qualities of dignity, of skill, and of high ideals which were so conspicuous in his own personality. That such a voice, so broadly heard, should issue from the study of a teacher is an inspiration. That is the highest debt which scholarship owes to Charles Eliot Norton.

> Ἀρετὴ δὲ κἂν θάνῃ τις οὐκ ἀπόλλυται,
> ζῇ δ' οὐκέτ' ὄντος σώματος.

BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
3 9999 09775 416 0